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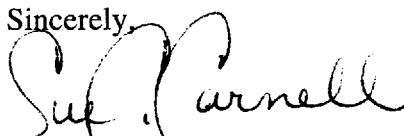
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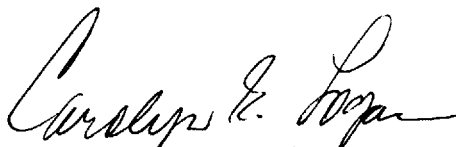
Dear Michigan Educator:

Attached is a list of questions and answers relevant to Michigan professional development requirements for new and veteran teachers. This document is designed to clarify some of the common questions about the requirements. The explanations herein do not address all situations instead, are intended to provide essential information about time requirements, recommended format, responsibility, mentoring and induction.

If you have additional questions, feel free to contact Cheryl L. Poole, Consultant for Professional Development, Michigan Department of Education at 517-241-4546 or email her at PooleCL@state.mi.us.

Sincerely,


Sue C. Carnell, Director
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Carolyn E. Logan, Director
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Professional Development for Michigan Teachers Questions and Answers

Revised November 21, 2001
(Bolded items are new language.)

Michigan Requirements for Professional Development There are two references in the Michigan School Code that specify requirements for the professional development of teachers. They are **Sections 1526 and 1527**.

Section 1526 states: *"For the first 3 years of his or her employment in classroom teaching, a teacher shall be assigned by the school in which he or she teaches to 1 or more master teachers, or college professors or retired master teachers, who shall act as a mentor or mentors to the teacher. During the 3-year period, the teacher shall also receive intensive professional development induction into teaching, based on a professional development plan that is consistent with the requirements of Section 3a of article II of Act No. 4 of the Public Acts of the Extra Session of 1937, being Section 38.83a of the Michigan Compiled Laws, including classroom management and instructional delivery. During the 3 year period, the intensive professional development induction into teaching shall consist of at least 15 days of professional development, the experiencing of effective practices in university-linked professional development schools, and regional seminars conducted by master teachers and other mentors."*

Section 1527 states: *"The board of each school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy shall provide:
at least 1 day of teacher professional development in the 1997-98 school year,
at least 2 days of teacher professional development in the 1998-99 school year,
at least 3 days of teacher professional development in the 1999-2000 school year,
at least 4 days of teacher professional development in the 2000-2001 school year,
at least 5 days of teacher professional development in the 2001-2002 school year,
and each school year after the 2001-2002 school year. Professional development days provided under this Section shall not be counted toward the professional development required under Section 1526."*

Critical to the implementation of Sections 1526 and 1527 is a practical explanation of **what qualifies as an acceptable professional development experience** that serves the purpose and intent of these mandates. It is the position of the MDE that a quality acceptable professional development activity is a planned and purposeful activity that is directly related to one's teaching assignment and is specifically designed to enhance the practitioner's capacity to meet and support the learning and developmental needs of all students.

Following are questions and answers intended to clarify and support the implementation of these mandates.

What is the purpose of Section 1526?

Section 1526 mandates the provision of support for the new teacher in making the adjustment from the academic study of teaching to the classroom application of what was learned. This period of adjustment is commonly referred to as "induction" into teaching.

What are the requirements for the induction of new teachers?

Section 1526 includes two major requirements that are to be met **during the first 3 years of employment in classroom teaching**: 1) The assignment of a mentor and 2) the provision of 15 days of professional development during the first 3 years of employment in classroom teaching.

Who is responsible for meeting these requirements?

The district is responsible for both assigning a mentor for the new teacher and for the provision of 15 days of professional development during the first 3 years of employment in classroom teaching.

Who may be assigned to mentor a new teacher?

Section 1526 specifies that a district may assign as a mentor, "1 or more master teachers, or college professors or retired master teachers."

Is a mentor teacher compensated for mentoring a new/novice teacher?

Any arrangement for compensating a mentor teacher is a local issue in which the Michigan Department of Education has no role.

What should be the nature of the mentor/novice teacher relationship?

The mentor/novice teacher relationship should be collegial in nature and all experiences should be directed toward the development and enhancement of the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for teaching and learning. This relationship should be a cooperative arrangement between peers in which new members of the teaching profession are provided ongoing assistance and support.

What is the role of the mentor?

The mentor should serve as a critical coach to the new teacher including the observation of his/her teaching practice and the provision of information and access to methods, techniques and tools for improvement.

Should the principal of the new teacher's school or one from a different school be assigned as a mentor teacher?

It is strongly advised that the mentoring process not be used to evaluate a new teacher. Because the Teacher Tenure Act requires new teachers to be evaluated by a school administrator, it is logical to assume that the lines between being supportive and being

evaluative might become blurred and that information and insight gained as a mentor would negatively impact the new teacher's evaluation.

What types of professional development are appropriate for the induction period?

Professional development appropriate for the induction period should focus on issues of teaching and learning for the novice teacher.

What can all teachers do to better support new teachers?

All teachers should become knowledgeable on what constitutes a quality mentoring process and support its use within their district.

Requirements of Professional Development

Both Sections 1526 and 1527 contain the provision of professional development. However, the *requirements of Section 1526 are unique to the new teacher during the first three years of classroom teaching.* Section 1527 includes both new and experienced teachers. This means that new teachers are to receive the 15 days of professional development required in Section 1526 plus the amount of professional development required in Section 1527.

What staff members are included in the required professional development days?

Section 1526 (New Teacher Mentoring and Induction) applies only to teachers within their first three years in the profession.

The language in Section 1527 (Required Professional Development Days) specifies the required days as ‘teacher professional development’ days. However, it is recognized that all staff who comprise the education community responsible for the education of students (e.g. principals, aides, bus drivers, guidance counselors, etc.) should be welcomed to participate in the professional development.

Who is responsible for providing the required professional development for new teachers?

Section 1526 explicitly states that "the teacher shall also receive intensive induction into teaching...." Based on the inclusion of this phrase, the responsibility for providing the 15 days of professional development rests with the district. Also, because the 15 days of professional development are addressed in relation to the process of induction, and because induction is a process by which new members are acculturated into an organization or field, it is illogical to assume that an individual/new member would be responsible for inducting him/herself. **Section 1527** explicitly states that "the district shall provide" the required amount of professional development for all teachers as scheduled.

The language in the school code is “the district shall provide”. What does “provide” mean?

There are multiple ways that districts might “provide” the required professional development. Many districts provide professional development for their staff on weekends or during the summer by paying stipends to the staff to compensate for

their time. Other districts provide substitute teachers and release time so that staff might acquire professional development that meets their professional needs. Examples might be time for mentor-mentee teams to work together or time attend professional development sessions at the ISD or colleges/universities. Increasingly districts are providing professional development in an array of ways that meet the varied professional needs of their staff. This often requires some creative thinking since no single approach will provide the flexibility necessary to address the professional development needs of a diverse staff.

Districts must provide five days of professional development annually. What are the districts required to provide for those who do not have full-time assignments?

Most quality professional development is provided in such a way that attending less than 100% of it would diminish its purpose or effectiveness. However, it is recognized that part-time staff may not be available to attend all the professional development provided by their district. In these cases it may be necessary to prorate the number of professional development hours to align with the assignment of the staff person. A district with an approach that provides professional development by allowing staff to make choices about type, topic and timing of their professional development makes it easier for part-time staff to acquire all the required hours.

What is the responsibility of teachers regarding professional development provided by the district?

It is expected that teachers will utilize the knowledge/skills to enhance their capacity to perform their duties in the classroom as they work with students.

How much time constitutes a day of professional development?

For the purpose of implementing Section 1526 and Section 1527, a "day" of professional development is determined by the district definition of a "contract day." For example, if a "day" is defined as 6.5 hours then 3 days would be 19.5 hours. Also, "a day" of professional development might be acquired in hourly increments that equal a "day." However, the number of hours acquired during a calendar day may not be counted as more than one day of professional development.

How must the 15 days required for professional development be disbursed over the three-year induction period?

No policy has been established on the disbursement of the 15 days for professional development. It is recommended that the needs of each new teacher be given primary consideration and that a plan to meet those needs be developed to comply with locally established guidelines and the district's resource capacity.

What happens if a new teacher changes districts before the end of the three-year induction period?

Section 1526 outlines mentor support and the amount of professional development training each new teacher is to receive. It does not specify the particular provider of these. It is expected that new teachers will receive support and training designated and

that these may be provided on a progressive basis by the district or districts of employment. This, of course, supports the need for districts to keep accurate records of participation, which can be transferred and it is expected that both the district and the new teacher will monitor this.

How will districts allocate the time to meet this requirement?

Models of high-quality professional development that engage teachers in learning can take many forms. For example: a special session, conference, or workshop on a specific topic, method, or approach might be held for the whole school, grade level or class to provide basic or other information; a meeting with colleagues might be held to provide information on analyzing student performance data and working with colleagues to decide what instructional changes are needed. Either of these approaches could be arranged for one to several hours, a day long or planned weekly sessions.

How the time is allocated/accumulated is a decision that should be made collaboratively by the participants and providers within the context of ongoing school improvement as it pertains to student learning.

Is there funding for the required professional development for teachers?

In 1996, the categorical funding for professional development was rolled into the formula grant that each district receives for student enrollment. Although the categorical funding for professional development no longer exists, the funding received by each district may be used for this purpose.

Districts are encouraged to utilize funding from available sources to provide the professional development that their teachers need to support the learning for all children. Funding from Title I and the Eisenhower Professional Development program are intended to provide learning opportunities that enhance teacher knowledge/skills to meet the learning needs of their students. Most funding sources have guidelines that direct the use of professional development funds and these must be considered.

What professional development is acceptable?

It is expected that the choice of models/forms and content of the professional development will be based on what a teacher or group of teachers need to know and/or be able to do to meet the learning needs of students. It should also be consistent with both the district and building school improvement goals/plan(s).

Can college/university coursework be counted to meet the district's responsibility for providing professional development?

Based on the inclusion of the phrase in Section 1526 "the teacher shall also receive intensive professional development induction into teaching.. ." and the phrase "the board of each district, ISD or PSA shall provide..." it is the position of MDE that the responsibility for providing the required amount of days of professional development rests with the district. It is, therefore, expected that district/public school academy compliance with this obligation would be demonstrated by the provision of accommodations and/or other means of support for professional development. Both

Sections 1526 and 1527 may be accurately described as an obligation to teachers for which the district/school is responsible.

Each teacher, however, is responsible for managing the status of his/her teaching certificate/credential by complying with all conditions, including the acquisition of 18 or more semester hours for the Professional Education certificate or 6 semester hour credits or equivalent continuing education units for the renewal of this certificate. **It is noted that neither 1526 or 1527 includes any reference to certification.**

The requirements of Sections 1526 and 1527 and the semester hour credit requirements for certification are considered unrelated because each is the distinct obligation of a separate entity (the district and the professional). This, however, does not preclude special arrangements whereby a relationship between the two is established through collaborative arrangement which would enable the obligation of both parties to be met.

Example: A district paid for all new teachers to attend a specific college course designed to meet district objectives and the new teachers received credit as an incentive to participate. Although the district was responsible for all associated costs, the new teacher has the option of including the hours earned in an 18 hour planned program for advanced certification, or may choose to use them to meet the credit requirement for the renewal of his/her Professional Education certificate.

Once the credits (for which the district paid) are earned, and recorded on an official transcript, it is a matter of choice on the part of the teacher as to how they may be used in relation to his/her teaching credential, and the district would have no role in this decision

Another example would be if a district contracted with an institution for the provision of a specific program/course to meet its professional development obligation, and the new teachers are given the option of registering for semester hour credit. Should this option be taken, the credits earned may be used for credential advancement or renewal.

Each of these examples are quite different from one where the teacher assumes total responsibility for the coursework, and the district assumes credit for meeting its professional development obligation to the teacher without any investment.

Is it acceptable for a district to establish a professional development schedule of activities/events from which teachers have the opportunity to chose what is needed to enhance their teaching practice?

Decisions regarding the learning opportunities provided fall within the prerogative of the district; however, districts are encouraged to work collaboratively with their teachers to identify types of professional development/experiences necessary to help support/increase student learning.

What is considered to be quality professional development?

Quality professional development exists in different forms based on its intent and purpose. Michigan's Curriculum Framework document identifies five models of professional development as defined by the National Staff Development Council. They range from basic group training sessions to individually-guided plans and activities. It is expected that the choice of models/forms will be based on what a teacher or group of teachers need to know and/or be able to do to meet the learning needs of students and support the school's improvement goals/plan(s).

Conferences and workshops provide basic information relevant to an area of need. However, in order to effect change, professional development must be intensive and sustained over time. And, it may vary in form from being coached by a qualified colleague to regular examination of one's instructional practice through ongoing observation or study groups for planning and development.